



EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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CHAPTER

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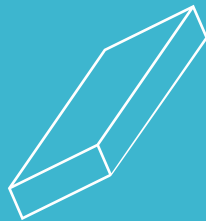
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VOLUNTEERING  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
IN EUROPE

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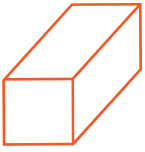
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# 1. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

## CONCEPT DEFINITION

In Germany, volunteering mostly takes place in voluntary organisations, for which the statutory legal form is the registered association (*eingetragene Verein, e.V.*). Furthermore the churches, welfare associations and public institutions such as schools and museums, also have volunteering programmes. In a broader sense this can be called the basic infrastructure where volunteering is organised.

In the narrow sense, the concept of “volunteering infrastructure” within the German debate contains organisations and institutions, such as volunteer agencies, volunteer centres or self-help contact points, that have been established over the past three decades. These facilities respond to the growing need of many volunteers for independent advice, matching and placing. Over the past three decades many different forms of infrastructure facilities, each have different priorities, have developed. Some for example address specific target groups such as senior volunteers (aged 50 and above) or disabled people (self-help contact points). All infrastructure facilities have however the common aim to act as information hubs and development centres for volunteering and civic engagement.

Overview and figures of existing infrastructure facilities in Germany include: approximately 300 volunteer agencies and centres (*Freiwilligenagenturen, zentren*); around 250 senior centres (*Seniorenbüros*); 212 self-help contact points (*Selbsthilfekontaktstellen*); 500 *Multi-Generation Centres or Houses*, established since 2006 through *Mehrgenerationenhäuser*, a programme funded through the European Social Fund (ESF); 237 community foundations (*Bürgerstiftungen*).

Further types of facilities with similar functions are the Local Contact Points within community administrations or set-up as independent hubs; Community Offices for Citizens, set-up in the frame of the ESF Programme *Soziale Stadt*; Focus Points for local development in rural areas; Neighbourhood-Centres (*Nachbarschaftshäuser*); Socio-Cultural Centres; Local initiatives in the context of the Agenda 21<sup>1</sup>; Parental and Family Centres; Care Centres. Most of these infrastructure facilities are rather small in size and capacity, having 1 to 2 professional staff, and few of them have up to 20 employees.

The main function of the infrastructure in Germany is to act as information hubs and development centres for volunteering, counsel and place volunteers into local projects and groups, explore, develop and transfer innovative projects and new forms of volunteering. Mentoring projects, where senior volunteers support young people at the gateway from school to professional life, have developed in Germany in large numbers.

1. Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organisations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human impacts on the environment. Agenda 21 was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. Available at: <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/>

Besides that there is a large sector of organisations and associations following well-defined purposes in specific areas that work with volunteers. The voluntary fire brigades or rescue services are part of this category. But also sport clubs and cultural initiatives such as laity chorales or amateur theatres traditionally are organised by and with volunteers since the 19th century. Furthermore there are a growing number of professionally led institutions such as kindergartens, schools, senior residences, hospitals, which work with volunteers.

## 2. VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE

Between 1999 and 2002 the Enquete Commission on the Future of Civic Engagement of the German Parliament (Enquete-Kommission Zukunft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements des Deutschen Bundestag) has established a commonly accepted definition of civic engagement/volunteering ("*bürgerschaftliches Engagement*") and defines it as including activities that:

- *are oriented towards the common good and benefit,*
- *are voluntary, without an employer-employee-relationship and its legal framework,*
- *take place in the public sphere and address groups outside the familial circle,*
- *are unpaid and not for financial gain, although in certain cases a limited payment as a form of compensation may be acceptable.*

Since 1999 a national survey on volunteering (Freiwilligensurvey) is compiled every five years based on 15,000 to 20,000 interviews. According to the latest survey of 2009, 36% of the German population above 14 years of age volunteer. This figure remains stable since 1999. Further findings of the survey show that more men (40% of total population) than woman (32%) are active in volunteering. There is a considerable gap between the new federal states in the East and the West of Germany, in the East fewer people volunteer, given that civil society infrastructure of independent associations did not exist before 1989 and is still developing today. Families with several children are more often engaged in volunteering than singles. More volunteers can be found in rural areas (40%) than in urban centres (30%).

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**There is a considerable gap between the East and the West of Germany: fewer easterners volunteer, given that civil society infrastructure of independent associations did not exist before 1989 and is still developing today.**

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Besides those who volunteer, an additional 30% of the German population is seen as active in society, as they are members of sport clubs or choirs. About one third of those who do not yet volunteer are generally willing to do so. Youth volunteering engagement has been slightly declining over the past ten years (from 37% in 1999 to 35% in 2009), partly the growing intensity of school and university obligations and the shorter study times seem to be responsible for this development; the volunteering engagement of the age group above 60 has increased considerably over the past ten years (from 31 to 37%).

Since the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001, public awareness of the value of volunteering and civic engagement has constantly increased. This is visible, amongst others, through the growing number of infrastructure facilities but also through the growing recognition, awards and prizes given to volunteers and outstanding persons. Since 2004 the annual Week of Civic Engagement (Woche des bürgerschaftlichen Engagement) is organised successfully as one of the main instruments for awareness raising and recognition for volunteering by the National Network for Civil Society (Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement, BBE) and gathers each year around 1,500 projects and initiatives at the local,

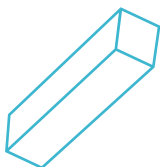


regional and national level<sup>2</sup>. Since 2009 a national volunteering award has been in place<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore there was an increase in the media coverage on volunteering over the past years. In 2009, ARD<sup>4</sup>, the main German broadcasting network, has designated a whole thematic week to volunteering.

## 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

### Legal provisions relating to volunteering

Currently work has begun on a comprehensive legal foundation for voluntary services (*Freiwilligendienste*). These services include the obligation to commit to charitable work for at least 20 hours a week. Voluntary services are especially attractive to teenagers and young adults who want to orientate themselves professionally. The proposed law on voluntary services is intended to regulate, among others, the extent and duration of voluntary services, the possibility of training and the amount of subsidy from public funds for the volunteer placements.



Recent developments make it however questionable whether or not this law will be adopted. And with the abolishment of conscription in 2011, the debate on the future of voluntary services has intensified. Until then there were several forms of services: the youth services at state level, “Voluntary Social Year” (*Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr*) and “Voluntary Ecological Year” (*Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr*), as well as specific voluntary service programmes led by federal ministries with different target groups and orientations.

In July 2011 a new National Voluntary Service Programme, available for all generations, was introduced. In view of this development, a voluntary service law would apply only to a small group of people, around 80,000 placements including 35,000 placements within the Voluntary Social Year and 35,000 placements in the newly introduced Federal Volunteer Service (*Bundesfreiwilligendienst*) replacing the German Civilian Service (*Zivildienst*) that ended along with the termination of conscription in 2011.

Apart from the regulation on voluntary service, there is no general law on volunteering. However, there is an announcement of such a law in the coalition agreement<sup>5</sup> of the federal government of 2009.

In October 2010 the German Government has published a National Strategy on Volunteering that was elaborated following a wide consultation process through the “National Forum for Engagement and Participation” organised by the BBE<sup>6</sup>. The National Strategy has been broadly criticised by civil society as it falls behind already agreed principle. In the eyes of most voluntary organisations and third-sector-associations, a comprehensive law for civic engagement would be helpful, but in order to achieve this, a thorough public discussion would be needed. This discussion would have to be led without constraint, time pressure and with all relevant actors in this area included. The mechanisms and results of the National Forum for Engagement and

2. [www.engagement-macht-stark.de](http://www.engagement-macht-stark.de)

3. [www.geben-gibt.de](http://www.geben-gibt.de)

4. ARD-Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Consortium of public-law broadcasting institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany) [www.ard.de](http://www.ard.de)

5. [www.cdu.de/portal2009/29145.htm](http://www.cdu.de/portal2009/29145.htm)

6. [www.b-b-e.de/index.php?id=forum](http://www.b-b-e.de/index.php?id=forum)

Participation could be used as a starting point for the discussion.

So far, the legal provisions relevant to volunteering can be found in different legal texts. For instance, this includes the Social Codes (*Sozialgesetzbücher*) II and XII – volunteering by unemployed or welfare recipients, VIII – open youth and street work, the Civil Code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) – public insurance for volunteers, the Income Tax Code (*Einkommensteuer Gesetzbuch*) – definition of charitable, non-profit status of bodies, rules for tax-free expense allowance for volunteers.

Further more, there are several regulations in the federal states, which have the main responsibility for the promotion of volunteering. These include for instance regulations on the exemption from volunteer assignments during work hours, rules for reimbursement of expenses for the volunteer fire department etc.

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Because of the lack of a comprehensive law on volunteering, the distinction is missing between civic engagement and professional activities like contract and secondary employment exercised to generate income.

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Because of the lack of an overarching and comprehensive law on volunteering, the legal regulation is missing a distinction between civic engagement and professional activities like contract and secondary employment exercised to generate income. According to experts there is also a need for a reform regarding the definition of the charitable status of public bodies. In this case, European law is also concerned (e.g. the European Services Directive). Many non-profit organisations working with volunteers are at the same time market participants and therefore under intense competitive pressure. This makes it important to consider protective mechanisms against the misuse of voluntary activities in profit-oriented organisations. It would be the task of the Federal Government and the Federal Parliament to create a legal basis for this, in coordination and cooperation with the federal states (Bundesländer) and consulting the voluntary sector.

### Funding provisions in the legal context

In the federal structure of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*), that distinguishes between federal-national level, state level and municipal level, it is primarily the local level (municipalities, cities and counties), which funds the infrastructure of volunteering permanently. The municipalities cooperate with many local independent actors such as charities and associations. The federal and the state level public authorities gave and give significant pushes regarding the construction of infrastructure through pilot projects. For example, the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ*) funded a large pilot programme *Mehrfamilienhäuser*: 500 multigenerational houses<sup>7</sup> each received 40,000 EUR per year (the term being five years). Earlier programmes of this Ministry were relevant to infrastructure, such as the 1990s funding of offices for elderly people<sup>8</sup> and empowerment, self-help agencies<sup>9</sup>.

They were the start for major infrastructure developments. At the moment the BMFSFJ promotes the Service Centre “*Initiative for Community Foundations*”<sup>10</sup> to advance the nationwide establishment of community foundations. In the next years, the federal government will be focussing on multi-generational housing and community foundations as types of infrastructure, while other infrastructures, such as volunteer agencies, will only be marginally funded. Beyond that, the BMFSFJ supports the national coordinating structures for the volunteer agencies (BAGFA, see below) with annual subsidies.

7. [www.mehrgenerationenhaeuser.de](http://www.mehrgenerationenhaeuser.de)

8. [www.seniorenbueros.org](http://www.seniorenbueros.org)

9. [www.seko-bayern.de](http://www.seko-bayern.de)

10. [www.die-deutschen-buergerstiftungen.de](http://www.die-deutschen-buergerstiftungen.de)

Other funding schemes can be found at state level. The state of Bavaria promotes the establishment of 40 voluntary agencies<sup>11</sup> in lagging rural areas. The state of Lower-Saxony supports one elderly citizen service office<sup>12</sup> in every county and every district town, which is aimed primarily at winning the civic engagement of the generation above 50. At the moment the Hanseatic City of Hamburg<sup>13</sup> is considering establishing up to 40-50 neighbourhood offices.

In the coming years, the federal and the state level as well as the municipalities have committed to better coordinate the promotion and funding policy for infrastructure development. In any case, all government levels want to sustainably secure and fund permanently, rather than initiating any new pilot programmes. In order to reach this goal they have to revise their strong preference, as seen in the last two decades, for short-term pilot projects.

However, it is very difficult to merge the various developments, initiated in recent years by the Bund, Bundesländer and local authorities. In addition, civil society actors must be involved because they are the most notably responsible body for infrastructure facilities. One can criticise that, the federal level has to learn how actors communicate at every level with stakeholders from civil society.

## 4. STRUCTURE OF THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING

### Volunteering infrastructure

In Germany there is no centralised national volunteer centre, but many associations which represent the types of infrastructure at the federal level. There is the National Association of Volunteer Centres and Agencies (*Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen, BAGFA*) as the national coordinating body of the volunteer agencies. Also at state level there are some associations of volunteer centres<sup>14</sup>, for example in North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria.

The National Clearing House for the Encouragement and Support of Self-Help Groups (*Nationale Kontakt und Informationsstelle zur Anregung und Unterstützung von Selbsthilfegruppen, NAKOS*<sup>15</sup>) is the national umbrella organisation of self-help organisations. Other relevant associations at national level are the Federal Association of Senior Citizens Offices (*Bundesverband für Seniorenbüros, BaS*), the Federal Association of Socio-Cultural Centres (*Bundesvereinigung Soziokultureller Zentren eV*<sup>16</sup>). The multi-generation houses do not have a form of self-organisation, but they are seeking for it. The Federal Association of German Foundations (*Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen*<sup>17</sup>) is coordinating the initiative for community foundations and currently trying to find contacts at the regional level, for community foundations.

The funding of these networks, foundations and associations is organised differently. Usually they are associations, of which the individual infrastructures are in fact members. However there are also associations under the umbrella of large charity organisations such as the Caritas Network of Volunteer Centres (*Verbund Freiwilligen-Zentren im Deutschen Caritasverband*<sup>18</sup>).

11. [www.bagfa.de](http://www.bagfa.de)

12. [www.ms.niedersachsen.de](http://www.ms.niedersachsen.de)

13. [www.hamburg.de/ehrenamtliches-engagement](http://www.hamburg.de/ehrenamtliches-engagement)

14. [www.lagfa.de](http://www.lagfa.de)

15. [www.nakos.de](http://www.nakos.de)

16. [www.soziokultur.de/bsz/](http://www.soziokultur.de/bsz/)

17. [www.stiftungen.org](http://www.stiftungen.org)

18. [www.caritas.de](http://www.caritas.de)

## Networks of specific interests, foundations and associations

In addition to these organisations, who represent certain types of infrastructure of civic engagement on state and federal level, there are national associations aiming at specific issues, some of which are closely linked to infrastructure developments; these include the *Stiftung Mitarbeit*<sup>19</sup> and the *Association of Active Citizenship*<sup>20</sup>, who supports the development of community foundations and is supported by the cooperative banks in Germany. Furthermore there are a few foundations that are particularly devoted to the promotion of civic engagement and its infrastructure, such as the *Robert Bosch Foundation*<sup>21</sup>, *Alfred Toepfer Foundation*<sup>22</sup> or the *Generali Future Fund*<sup>23</sup>. Eventually, there are thematic networks, such as the Centre for Corporate Citizenship Germany (*Centrum für Corporate Citizenship Deutschland, CCCD*<sup>24</sup>) or *UPJ*<sup>25</sup> that are active in the field of corporate volunteering and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), as well as voluntary agencies, who serve as intermediary organisations to their members.

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*In 13 years, the number of civil engagement organisations functioning in Germany almost doubled from 300,000 to 574,000.*

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The largest association is the German Olympic Sports Federation (*Deutsche Olympische Sportbund, DOSB*<sup>26</sup>), with 27.5 million (as of 2008) members. Almost 25% of all volunteers engage in sports. In addition there are the two main churches (Roman Catholic and Evangelical Lutheran) and associated with them the largest two charity associations: *Caritas*<sup>27</sup> (Catholic) and *Diakonie*<sup>28</sup> (Protestant), with tens of thousands of facilities such as homes for the elderly, nursery schools and other social services, where people volunteer. 7% of the population over 14 years is involved in church and religious associations. 2.7% are engaged in political interest group (above all in the parties), 1.7% in professional interest group, especially in the unions (source: *Freiwilligensurvey 1999/2004*). In recent decades, these large organisations have steadily lost members. At the same time, however, many small initiatives and associations have grown and their number continues to increase.

Thus, from 1990 until 2003, the number of organisations almost doubled from 300,000 to 574,000. Between 2001 and 2003 the number grew by 30,000, but it has to be noted that growth took place primarily within the new federal states of the former East Germany.

The newly created (in the last three decades) volunteering infrastructure cooperates on many levels with traditional associations and organisations in sports, culture, education and social issues. Together they develop projects and promote volunteering in their organisations. However, these contacts could be even more intense. Sometimes the traditional organisations, such as volunteer fire departments or charities, consider the new infrastructural facilities as competitors. However, the new infrastructure facilities are also partly linked organisationally with the charities. For instance Caritas, the biggest German charity, started to found and fund volunteer centres in 1996. As such, 53 out of the 300 voluntary agencies in Germany belong to the Caritas network of Volunteer Centres<sup>29</sup>.

Despite these connections and cooperation, the main challenge of the further development of volunteering infrastructure will be to bridge the gap between voluntary agencies and the

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19. [www.mitarbeit.de](http://www.mitarbeit.de)

20. [www.aktive-buergerschaft.de](http://www.aktive-buergerschaft.de)

21. [www.bosch-stiftung.de](http://www.bosch-stiftung.de)

22. [www.toepfer-fvs.de](http://www.toepfer-fvs.de)

23. [www.generali-zukunftsfonds.de](http://www.generali-zukunftsfonds.de)

24. [www.cccd.de](http://www.cccd.de)

25. [www.upj.de](http://www.upj.de)

26. [www.dosb.de](http://www.dosb.de)

27. <http://www.caritas-ehrenamt.de/>

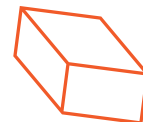
28. [www.pflege-und-diakonie.de/ehrenamt/index.html](http://www.pflege-und-diakonie.de/ehrenamt/index.html)

29. [www.caritas-ehrenamt.de/53691.html#Bayern](http://www.caritas-ehrenamt.de/53691.html#Bayern)

traditional German associations with their history dating back to the 19th Century. The traditional associations have certain needs for support: they have difficulties in recruiting new voluntary trustees and board members and they face funding problems. In order to take a closer look at this phenomenon the Robert Bosch Foundation aims to start a new research programme; it is planned that volunteer centres will support traditional associations in organisational development and in the search for suitable candidates for board members.

## Cross-cutting networks for civic engagement

In Germany cross-communication and cooperation structures of the different types of infrastructure are not very pronounced yet. There are some networks at state level, such as the *Network for civic engagement in Bavaria*<sup>30</sup>. Their members are volunteer agencies, senior offices and self-help agencies. In order to prevent overlapping fields of work as well as competition in fund-raising and in the allocation of public resources, an improvement of cross-cooperation forms is urgently needed. However, at the local level there are some networks where all local types of infrastructure are involved. These include the *Network for Civic Engagement in Berlin*<sup>31</sup>, the *network Aktivoli Hamburg*<sup>32</sup>, *Förderung von Bürgerschaftlichem Engagement (FöBE)*<sup>33</sup> or the *Round Table Civic Engagement Nürnberg*.



In June 2002 the National Network for Civil Society (*Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement, BBE*<sup>34</sup>) was founded. BBE acts as national network-structure for all organisations involved in the promotion of volunteering, linking associations from the Third Sector, business and work life and federal and community institutions. BBE consists of 230 member organisations including the Churches, unions, corporations, foundations and governmental institutions as well as the full scope of the German civil society associations on national level (most of them being sectoral umbrella organisations representing millions of members) as well as the infrastructure associations. Its different working groups formulate and publish statements and advisory opinions. They address topics like education and civic engagement, local engagement policy, corporate volunteering and civic engagement policies in Europe. Over the past two years the BBE has organised the consultation process to develop the National Strategy for Volunteering recently published by the German government.

## 5. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

### Public institutions

Within the federal government the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) is responsible for matters concerning civic engagement and volunteering. Within the ministry, there is a subdivision, Civic Engagement, having over 30 employees. In recent years the big model project of multigenerational homes was of major importance for the promotion of infrastructure of civic engagement especially. Moreover the BMFSFJ promotes large and small pilot projects and public campaigns. Significant financial contribution is required, however, in the near future for the construction of the federal voluntary services. The BMFSFJ also funded image campaigns for civic engagement, such as in 2009, the public campaign “Geben gibt”. The Ministry also supports the “Week of Civic Engagement” organised by the BBE that takes place every year in September.

30. [www.wir-für-uns.de](http://www.wir-für-uns.de)

31. [www.berlin.de/buergeraktiv/be/wissen/berlinerlandesnetzwerk.html](http://www.berlin.de/buergeraktiv/be/wissen/berlinerlandesnetzwerk.html)

32. [www.aktivoli.de](http://www.aktivoli.de)

33.

34. [www.b-b-e.de](http://www.b-b-e.de)



Each federal state has offices or departments concerned with the promotion of volunteering. Usually they are attached to the prime minister's office or to specific ministries. In recent years much has been achieved: for example improving the insurance protection for volunteers and the culture of recognition through VolunteerCards and certificates. Furthermore currently processes of good governance (civic municipality) appear to be gaining importance and are funded by several states.

Local administration of medium and big-sized cities but also of counties have employed more and more paid full-time coordinators for volunteers and fundraising in recent years. The responsibilities of these coordinators are inter alia to open the different agencies and departments of public service for civic engagement. This includes offering internal training and coaching towards a citizen-oriented administration, which sees itself as a facilitator enabling civic engagement. These full-time coordinators address directly the citizenry. They organise for example participatory processes in important issues of community development. These organisational forms of citizen participation (Agenda-Commissioner) can be traced back to the proposals of the local Agenda 21. Due to the development of municipal governance these forms of citizen participation have grown in recent years.

There is a special situation in the state of Baden-Württemberg<sup>35</sup>, where there are volunteer centres within local authorities. Therefore the volunteer managers are employees of the city or county.

### Other stakeholders

The political foundations of the major parties, i.e. the *Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation*<sup>36</sup> (Social Democrats) and *Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation*<sup>37</sup> (Christian Democrats) have become important fora for the discourse on civic engagement. They organise conferences and publish discussion papers on a regular basis.

There is no widespread programme on service-learning, but within the coming years the schools are going to become increasingly important partners and stages for volunteering. One reason lays within the rising of full-time schools in Germany. The voluntary work that traditionally took place in organised youth sports, cultural clubs, outside the school, now has to be integrated into the school life. Secondly there are more and more voluntary mentoring arrangements relating to schools. Here, people who are in business or already have a working life behind them, are supporting pupils on their way to chose a profession. Thirdly there is a lively debate on the subject and importance of informal and social learning, in which experts keep pointing to the importance of strengthening civic engagement opportunities. In addition, better opportunities for participation are required to make the school a place where democratic attitudes and a civil discussion culture are practiced<sup>38</sup>.

The National engagement strategy of the Federal Government has highlighted in particular schools as an important reference point of the engagement policy. However, the responsibility of the school system lies not within the federal government, but with the states.

Some states such as Baden-Wuerttemberg initiated extensive programmes integrating civic engagement in school. Approximately 1,000 schools already have voluntary youth guides. Many

35. [www.buergerengagement.de](http://www.buergerengagement.de)

36. [www.fes.de](http://www.fes.de)

37. [www.kas.de](http://www.kas.de)

38. [www.wir-fuer-uns.de/landesnetzwerk/i1702.htm](http://www.wir-fuer-uns.de/landesnetzwerk/i1702.htm) school/

other states are hesitating here. BBE organises every two years a large expert conference on Civic Engagement and schools. There, best practise examples of local schools which are opening up to civic engagement are presented and documented. The 2010 conference of the BBE was held in October in Hamburg<sup>39</sup>.

In recent years the number of volunteer agencies that provide service-learning programmes for public schools and day care centres for children has increased significantly. Particularly popular are voluntary reading projects to improve the language skills of children. According to the Volunteer Survey 2009, 7% of all volunteers are active in kindergartens and schools. Similarly, infrastructures such as voluntary agencies (see above) are equally active in cooperation with companies.

## 6. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Most of the infrastructures of civic engagement depend on funding from public budgets. Usually the funding is not permanent, but tied to pilot programmes ending after a few years. There is no existing overview of the sum invested by the public sector (federal, states, local level) in infrastructures of volunteering. In the multi-generation houses programme (*Mehrgenerationenhäuser*) for example, 500 facilities are each funded with 40,000 EUR per year by the federal government. Other types of infrastructure receive far less funds.

The municipalities (cities and counties) are mainly responsible for the sustainable promotion of volunteer agencies and centres. Sometimes charities themselves finance volunteering agencies. Additional permanent funding opportunities exist for individual types of infrastructure like nursing centres (promoting volunteer work in nursing care), counselling services for family caregivers (for example, in the care of dementia sick people) and self-help contact centres (solely health self-help groups) receive money from the nursing care insurance funds.

In part, funds also flow from the urban development promotion programme<sup>40</sup> or from the development of rural areas programme of the European Union, *Integrierte ländliche Entwicklung (ILE)* and *LEADER*<sup>41</sup>, in infrastructure development for volunteer work. In addition to this basic funding, there are resources, for example from particular services (Corporate volunteering), from foundations and donations. However, since 2009 the financial crisis put these resources at risk.

Furthermore, there are funds from foundations. Especially active are the Robert Bosch Foundation, the Generali Zukunftsfond, the Alfred Toepfer Foundation. They consider civic engagement as a core task. Donations and sponsorship mainly play a role in individual projects; they are not involved in permanent funding. The share of financing from public funds is estimated at three quarters of the total revenue of the infrastructures of civic engagement.

Many of the volunteering infrastructures hope to increase revenue from enterprises in the coming years, for example, by the organisation of Caring Days. In recent years, the expenditure of public funding for civic engagement has increased continuously. Due to the financial crisis the government has to deliver austerity measures. Now it is feared that this positive trend is going to be reversed.

39. [www.freiwilligen-agentur.de/download/Bildung\\_Hamburg.pdf](http://www.freiwilligen-agentur.de/download/Bildung_Hamburg.pdf)

40. [www.sozialestadt.de](http://www.sozialestadt.de)

41. [www.landentwicklung.bayern.de](http://www.landentwicklung.bayern.de), [www.leaderplus.de](http://www.leaderplus.de)



## 7. REGULAR AND SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

Since 1999 a national survey on volunteering (Freiwilligensurvey) is compiled every five years based on 15,000 to 20,000 interviews. According to the latest survey, carried out in 2009, 36% of the German population above the age of 14 volunteer. This survey is financed by the Federal

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**For each euro invested into the volunteering infrastructure there are 7 euros expected in return.**

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Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The national government also has declared to publish a national report on volunteering every 4-5 years. The first issue is foreseen to be presented in the second half of 2012 with the main focus on corporate volunteering and CSR.

Further research is done on the effect and impact of volunteering. By order of the Bavarian Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs the Catholic University of Munich has undertaken a use-of-potential analyses. The result was that for each EUR invested into voluntary infrastructure there would be 7 EUR in return.

## 8. ETHICS AND QUALITY STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERING

There is a growing number of training and formation services for volunteer management (e.g. Akademie für Ehrenamtlichkeit e.V.) addressing central issues and standards on how to work with volunteers, culture of recognition, participation and training. BAGFA has developed a comprehensive “seal of quality” for volunteer agencies. So far 54 agencies have undergone the certification process, which will be undertaken by an independent expert group. For the multi-generation houses a comprehensive self-evaluation instrument has been developed. Each house has to undergo an intensive self-evaluation analysis on a regular basis. Future funding depends on this analysis.

## 9. AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Over the past years many regional and local online databases have been created, which give an overview of facilities and volunteering possibilities. Up until now however no national standard could be established, so there is no nationwide outline of the total number of available places. The first attempt for a nationwide database was funded by the BMFSFJ in 2009 but failed due to technical problems.

Since the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001 the public awareness of the value of volunteering and civic engagement has constantly increased. This is visible, for instance, through the growing number of infrastructure facilities but also through the growing number of awards and prizes for volunteers and outstanding people. Since 2004 the annual Week of Civic Engagement (Woche des bürgerschaftlichen Engagement) is organised successfully as one of the main instruments for awareness raising and recognition for volunteering by the National Network for Civil Society (Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement – BBE) and gathers

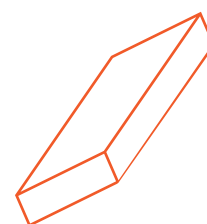
each year around 1,500 projects and initiatives at local, regional and national levels<sup>42</sup>. Since 2009 a national volunteering award has been proclaimed<sup>43</sup>. Furthermore an increase in the media coverage on volunteering can be recognised over the past years. In 2009 the main German broadcasting network, the ARD, has designated a whole thematic week to volunteering.

## 10. ADDITIONAL COUNTRY SPECIFICITIES



The promotion of the welfare state traditionally plays the most important role within Third Sector funding policy. This also counts for the volunteering infrastructure. For development of the infrastructure it will be important to secure a sustainable funding through the public sector in order to achieve a broad based extension of facilities. National, state and local level will have to cooperate more closely.

In recent time a new protest movement within civil society can be noted on all political levels (train station in Stuttgart, campaign against nuclear technologies etc.). This growing political discontent of the citizens indicates the necessity for new governance structures and political participation at all levels.



## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past years volunteering infrastructure has grown significantly in Germany. However, the facilities are mostly insufficiently and insecurely financed. Very rarely they have more than one or two full paid staff members. This leads to a great diversity on the one hand, and to a growing insecurity on the other hand. It will be one of the main tasks of volunteering policy in the years to come to ensure greater stability. The federal structure in Germany marks one problem in this direction. A profound coordination between the federal and state levels is needed taking into account the reality and needs of the municipalities. Despite declarations of intent however no complementary and sustainable programmes are in sight. One can doubt whether they would be realisable at all.

Also the National Strategy on Volunteering, passed by the Federal government in October 2010, does not yet include strategic solutions for the coordination and funding of the volunteering infrastructure. The federal government should explore how a basic core funding of infrastructure facilities could be realised through the federal budget. The funding should be part of a national instrument for the promotion of civic engagement and should contain the following components: basic funding of infrastructure facilities; specific programmes directed to different target groups, such as elderly, migrants; innovative schemes, transfer of good practice.

42. [www.engagement-macht-stark.de](http://www.engagement-macht-stark.de)

43. [www.geben-gibt.de](http://www.geben-gibt.de)

For the establishment of a strategic approach to the promotion of volunteering a reliable analysis of the reality at place is necessary. In this respect an evaluation of the instruments and the quality management is needed.

The EU, with its influential programme funding, could be helpful in promoting a volunteering strategy aimed at the public welfare. Here, the upcoming programme generation 2014-2020, could already set the course.

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## Resources

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